



Ewan Pearson

## In Vidi we trust

Ewan Pearson

“I recently saw a table of data comparing air quality in the last 5 Olympic cities. Rio was second worst to Beijing. London was best.

I am sure the data were sound, although no source was given. Perhaps the IOC?

I should stress that in writing this article for you I have not been the victim of some scam, embarrassed by something I or someone else has presented, or seen any new research on the matter.

It's just that the air quality data reminded me that we place a great deal of trust in what we see presented to us in the visual form (Vidi: I saw), whether it be air quality readings, fund performance or the population of a city. But should we

We have to play devil's advocate in much of our work, and as part of this are big fans of the quote attributed to Benjamin Disraeli: “*there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics*” to which we would add for presentations “*and then there are visual aids*”.

Visuals are intended to aid the speaker in the act of communication, to assist the reader to comprehend, and to be analysed after the event.

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd.

The Presentation & Business Development Specialists

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



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## Lies, damned lies and statistics on Danish statistics



56.7% of all statistics add a decimal to seem more credible

10-80% of all statistics are more or less imprecise

20% or 1 in 4 statistics contain incorrect calculations

30% of all statistics are internally inconsistent

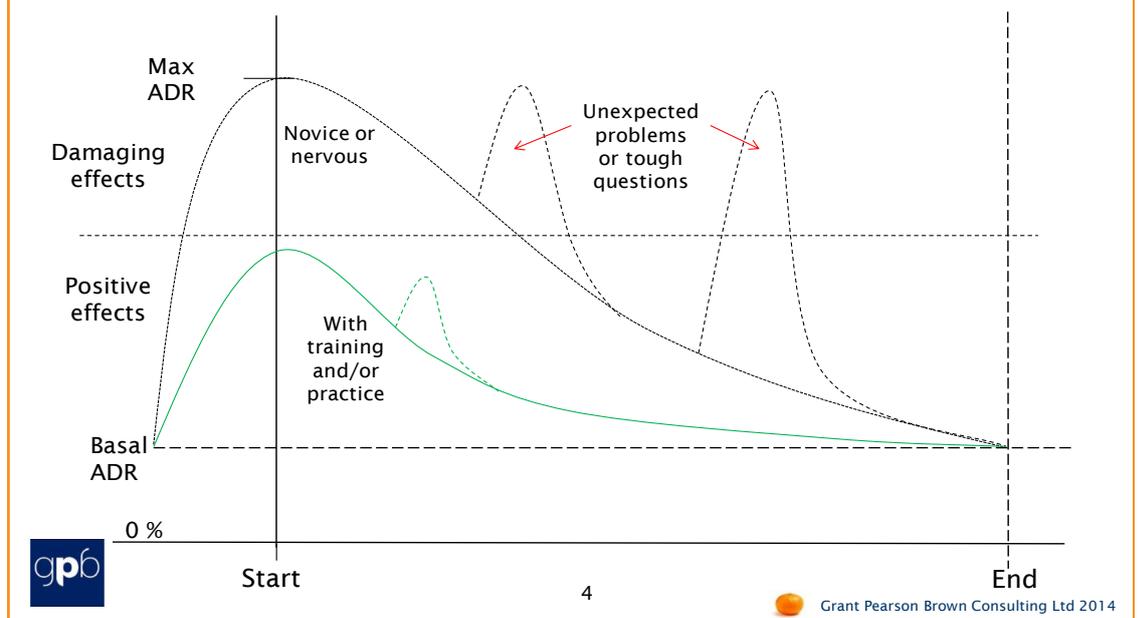
trust so easily?

(Continued on page 2)

It is true that visuals largely do this, and I should stress that in some sectors we work in, notably financial services and pharmaceuticals, there are some very dedicated people whose job it is to remove malfeasance, misdemeanour and

- the incorrect relative size given to different images
- The misleading use or alignment of colours and shapes
- Using out-of-date data
- Using false logic e.g. in 'therefore'

### Adrenalin levels when presenting



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misrepresentation. A very worthy, if not highly paid cause.  
*Here is a slide we made ourselves. Notice anything?*

Visual aids are in a whole category of their own. The information presented in this medium is by and large trusted, taken as read to be true, and because of this is rarely if ever verified.

So there is an onus on the creator of the presentation to be honest and trustworthy with the visuals they create. And yet we all "know of someone" (but never us, oh no...) who has taken a set of data and presented them in a misleading, disingenuous, or false way, or to bolster weak arguments.

Simple tricks include:

- the setting of start and end dates to suit their purposes
- the use of scale or non-zero origin on a Y axis that conveniently flattens or steepens a line or bar graph

arrows that deem to show premise and conclusion

- An over-assertive or reasonable-looking claim about future events (which no-one can know for sure)
- Hub and spoke imagery that makes false or overstated connections
- The use of own source material that cannot easily be verified
- Conflicting data or information on different pages.

So, the point I really want to make here is for both presenters and their audiences, as most of you will be one or the other at various times:

If you are the presenter, it is your moral duty to ensure that your visual aids tell the whole truth, and as a member of an audience, you need to have a sceptical eye on what you are shown, as visuals have a high credibility that they may (or may not!) deserve.

By Ewan Pearson

# The mental simulator

Lynda Russell-Whitaker



*“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference”*  
Sir Winston Churchill

Churchill may have been referring more broadly about ‘attitude’; here I’m going to write about it quite specifically as it relates to spoken communications. I am sure, however, that attitude does make a big difference.

The attitude, or in Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) terms, the ‘state’ you adopt when you’re about to deliver a pitch, a presentation or a speech, plays a crucial part in how you come across to your audience. It can set the tone well – or badly – for the duration of your talk.

Having had a fascination for ‘states’ or ‘attitudes’ of mind for more than 25 years, I decided almost ten years ago to do my NLP Business Practitioner training. I wanted a suite of tools and techniques that would benefit my clients when I coached them, which they could then use themselves, such as in preparing for a pitch presentation or any other form of public speaking.

One of the more effective techniques to get yourself into the right state of mind and accomplish your goals is something called **Process Visualisation**, or **Mental Simulation**. This is not to be confused with the sort of fantasy visualisation (outcome-based) which seems to be so popular in the self-help genre.



*Visualising success really does work. It is important to have a goal in sight*

In 1999, Californian psychologists, Lien Pham and Shelley E. Taylor published a

paper on a piece of research\* in which they described their experiment thus: *“For 5 to 7 days prior to a midterm examination, college freshmen (a) mentally simulated either the process for doing well on the exam (good study habits) or (b) simulated a desired outcome (getting a good grade) or (c) both. A self-monitoring control condition (d) was included. (Comparative) results indicated that Process Simulation enhanced studying and improved grades; the latter effect was mediated by enhanced planning and reduced anxiety.”*

Process Simulation enhances the ability to visualise the outcomes, improving the pursuit of the goal. The technique is a simple one to master and can be used in a variety of different situations; athletes have been using this form of visualisation for decades. But how does it apply to presenters?

Well, let’s start with some of the goals we might have in a public speaking situation:

- reducing anxiety and managing nerves
- conveying credibility and gravitas
- seeming confident and knowledgeable
- handling tricky questions and concerns well.

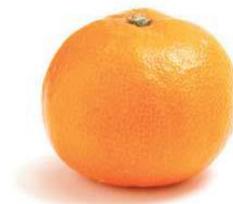
Now assume you’re using a slide deck that you have been involved in preparing. You might visualise or ‘mentally simulate’ yourself:

- speaking fluently and confidently, supported by your slides
- arriving ahead of time to ensure A/V equipment is compatible and working
- coping effectively with any technical or logistical issues that arise
- presenting to an audience who may be devoid of expression, texting on their mobiles, talking to each other or, hopefully, nodding and smiling in agreement
- handling difficult questions and any concerns.



Lynda Russell-Whitaker

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\*Pham, Lien B. and Shelley E. Taylor (1999), “From Thought to Action: Effects of Process-Versus Outcome-Based Mental Simulations on Performance,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25 (2), 250-60.

# The mental simulator... continued

The key to Process Simulation is to link the thought with an action; you will notice that the points above are very action-orientated. These actions can then be rehearsed prior to an important presentation.



One example of Process Simulation

Earlier this month, I used the Mental Simulation approach before I trained several groups of 'Super Users' at Great Ormond Street Hospital, prior to the launch of a new clinical system. A key outcome I had in mind was to successfully train a select group so that they had the knowledge to train others. Some of the elements that worked well for me personally on this project were:-

- brief, frequent project meetings for 10 days leading up to the start of the training that gave me a high degree of comfort with the subject matter
- owning the content on the slide deck, through familiarising myself and editing it where necessary
- rehearsing alone (recording myself on my mobile) and in front of two colleagues
- mentally simulating my delivery a further two times
- making sure the A/V equipment in all rooms we trained in was checked ahead of time.

I'm not saying there were no technical glitches or challenging questions, but being prepared well by using such a process is a significant part of what distinguishes an average presentation

from a outstanding one (another being how brilliant the content is!).

Being so well-prepared created a positive attitude in me, so that I was (and came across as) confident and competent in those training sessions from day one; this was transmitted quite clearly to my audience.

Process Visualisation has you plan and take the necessary steps to ensure that you have prepared well, which in turn gives you greater confidence and reduces your anxiety, putting you in the right state prior to your presentation.

Perhaps that's not as exciting or thrilling as fantasising about a standing ovation, but it's far more grounded in reality, therefore achievable and so considerably more effective.

Thinking about the next time you are asked to present at an important meeting or deliver a paper at a conference, what might you be able to prepare for in advance to get you into the optimum mental state? Could you anticipate some potential difficult questions or objections that might be raised, and prepare your answers in advance?

Could you mentally simulate being self-assured with a *mixed* audience of engaged and disinterested people?

You will most likely have your own personal goals that you have visualized. However, a good result could be that you are well prepared but do not seem over-rehearsed, insincere or stilted.

Or, as Sir Winston Churchill said:  
*"I'm just preparing my impromptu remarks".*

By Lynda Russell-Whitaker

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# The Fourth Doll

Alastair Grant



In 2007 I wrote an article on negotiation based on idea of the three Russian Dolls. But I now think there is a fourth one.

So, what has prompted this radical change of view?! Well, it's down to a recent negotiation of my own, rather than any client work.

A close relative of mine, in her nineties, energetic and delightful but suffering from the onset of dementia, needed help.

I found myself in a tough negotiation, and even confrontation, with a wide range of organisations: Thames Water, BT, a bank, Royal Mail, the NHS, an art dealer, and finally her IFA - who ended up in prison when found guilty of theft.

I learnt that winning these negotiations required *persistence* over several years. I will return to this point later.



*The fourth doll; her name is Persistence*

First though a recap on the other 3 Dolls: We can identify some common threads in all negotiations, for example the need to plan what we want to get, and coping with resistance from the other party if our wishes do not coincide with theirs.

To describe these threads more graphically, we decided some time ago to use the metaphor of the Russian dolls. Who are they? They are of course a nest of dolls placed one inside another, and in Russia are called Matryoshka Dolls (something to do with 'little matron').

## The Outer Doll: THE RELATOR

The Outer Doll is all about Relationship and Communication Skills. This is about building trust, respect, finding out information and listening carefully. Note that gaining trust is not the same as being liked. Being courteous and pleasant would be preferable to being abrasive and assertive in certain synergistic settings, but any negotiation is still better played with a degree of reserve and caution whilst (where possible) being open.

It is helpful to find out the wishes and needs of the other party - who may also be reserved and cautious. And so it's important to be skilled in winking out your counterparty's objectives whilst not disclosing too early your own innermost thoughts. This can lead to a kind of 'stale mate' though, as both sides entrench their positions. You need to know what you can be upfront about, and what you wish to hold back on what might be a tradeable concession.

## The Middle Doll: THE PROCESSOR

The middle doll is about process. You will need to be clear with yourself what you would want to get out of the negotiation.

Here are some good questions to ask yourselves: What is your starting position? At what stage do you walk away? What do you know about or consider are the objectives of the other party? Are there areas of concession where you can trade something of low cost to yourselves that are seen as of great value by the other party?

Sound preparation of the Middle Doll can make all the difference between success and failure.



Alastair Grant

Advice  
*squeezed*  
straight from  
the



*(Continued on page 6)*

# The Fourth Doll... continued

The Harvard Business School has some excellent checklists\* which are free to download to help you with this.

## The Inner Doll: THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The Inner Doll is all about tactics and psychology. This is the area where a tough negotiator will weaken the other person's position through a number of techniques. A weak negotiator will reveal his hand too soon, concede too readily and lose his nerve. There are plenty of manipulative techniques.

For example a sharp intake of breath as the other party makes what you see as a controversial point. It's often called 'the flinch', and is usually a visual and/or vocal reaction.

Another tactic is in response to a demand for a concession. You may feel able to make such a concession, but make it small and ensure you get something in return, a tradable concession rather than a unilateral one.

## The Fourth Doll: THE PERSISTER

My negotiations on behalf of my elderly relative were protracted, starting back in 2009. Some items were sorted quickly but others dragged on, like one of those hills you climb: when you think you are near the top you realise that you are just facing a false crest! I also re-confirmed that all of the first three Dolls were essential; for example I worked hard at building good relationships with others.

One funny one was with the postman, who was delivering scam mail by the bucket load which he was under a legal obligation to deliver. Negotiation failed at first and then success came when he agreed to let the Hall Porter of her block of flats act as a filter. So an oblique approach worked. But the biggest test of persistence came with the Crown Prosecution Service, the CPS. The accused IFA, found guilty of theft, served a custodial service. My role, with power of attorney, was to negotiate the return of the stolen money.

The CPS closed the door on a claim for compensation, despite the defendant

owning a house in London. A forced sale would have released sufficient money to pay back what he had stolen.

For months we were rebuffed by the defendant through a series of Magistrate and Crown Court hearings. But then we got lucky: a friend, a recently retired judge, taught us how to negotiate in these settings. Well-crafted letters were sent to the presiding Judge which attracted favourable attention, but still the CPS refused to budge, so we decided to write to the head of the CPS.

We judged a letter of complaint would soon be sent into the complaints procedure and disappear for many weeks. So, instead, using a bit of Edward De Bono's Lateral Thinking, we sent a letter suggesting that the CPS case officer might benefit from advice and guidance. Within days they agreed to review the case. Victory was ultimately achieved. So the lessons learnt were:

- Don't give up if the front door is slammed in your face. There is often another door that you can enter.
- Keep a rigorous record of events, as mastery of detail can be key.
- Be polite and restrained at all times
- Complaining can look confrontational, a more lateral approach can yield a better result.
- In letters or emails ask very clear closed questions. If the other party will not answer those questions then you may put them on the back foot. Ask the questions again; be persistent.

I would argue that co-ordinating these four distinct skills is as important as the individual skills themselves. For example in 'Outer Doll' mode we try hard to establish good relationships. Yet when it comes to tactics (Inner Doll), we have to cooperate in an area of confrontation. If we are still plugged into the Outer Doll mindset then we may concede too readily in the heat of the moment.

**Persistence** is at the core, so becomes the innermost Doll, and may well be the most important one of all.

By Alastair Grant

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\* <http://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/negotiation-skills-daily/negotiation-design-dimensions-a-checklist/>

# Illuminating negotiating

Richard Keith



After Alastair's mainly philosophical article, here are some more practical tips for the thrust and parry of negotiating

Some have argued that life itself is one long negotiation. Balancing our desires with the desires of others is a daily occurrence that often requires skilful communication. Post-Brexit, the UK is now beginning one of the most significant negotiations in its history in order to position itself for trade and investment outside the EU. To be successful, the negotiation skills of those sent in to do this will need to be rapier-sharp.

We at GPB define negotiation as: "The method used to reach agreement by two parties who initially disagree". In business we all negotiate overtly all the time, whether that be over trade, employment or even the management of staff and tasks. It's clearly an important commercial (and political!) skill, so here's a reminder of the key points to remember.

*Prepare well before the negotiation (Doll 1)*  
Sounds obvious, doesn't it. But what does 'preparation' mean exactly? Well, you have to work out what your persuasive case is. You have to know what style of negotiation is your natural tendency (more on style in a moment). You need to know what success looks like – that is, what are your objectives and key priorities? You need to determine also what are the deal breakers: at what point will you walk away?

When preparing remember to be open with yourself (and your team) about the hidden issues and weaknesses your opponent may exploit.

Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.



Abraham Lincoln

*Abe's moonlighting as a lumberjack taught him much he could use back in Washington.*

That way you can establish a counter strategy for when your opponents start picking at those holes.

## *Picture your optimum outcome*

It is always useful to know whether you are aiming for a **Synergistic** outcome, where you want to get the best for both parties; or you are striving for the more common **Antagonistic** outcome, using your strengths to persuade or pressure the other side into giving away concessions until they concede victory.

The antagonistic outcome is the more frequently sought, but be open to the times when a synergistic outcome will be preferable. For example, if you are seeking a profitable long-term alliance then bashing an opponent into submission on the first deal may not be the best way to start the relationship. Yet, a synergistic outcome is harder to achieve – it requires trust, openness, and most importantly an alignment of both parties from the start that a 'win-win' is what everyone wants.

## *Know your style*

In 'Enter the Dragon' Bruce Lee is asked about his style of combat; he nonchalantly replies: "My style? You could call it the art of fighting without fighting."



*Of course, Bruce didn't always rely on 'fighting without fighting'.*

Whilst you don't need the same mastery of your inner ch'i that Bruce possessed, knowing whether you are a Director/Street

*(Continued on page 8)*



Richard Keith

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# illuminating negotiating... continued

## Our Services

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd (GPB) is a respected adviser based in London. We enhance the performance of businesses, helping clients to excel in the use of the spoken and written word, improving the performance of individuals and teams. Over the long term our work improves the way a firm does business.

We coach and advise individuals to perform at their best in the toughest situations including: Presentations, New Business Pitches, Business Development, Negotiating, Media Interviews, Telephone Calls and Document Writing.

We also produce scientific Voice, Visual and Content Analysis reports, then provide content, voice coaching and visual (non-verbal) communications advice.

Our clients' needs are the only focus of our work; we listen to them and closely tailor our response to deliver first class coaching and advice. In support of this we selectively pursue new ideas and approaches, continually hone our advice and create tools such as Prospect Relationship Management (PRM), Buyer's Pyramid, Just a Minute, the Fire Bell Test, the FBI Funnel, Q&A methodologies and the Information Iceberg.

Fighter, a Showman/Creative, a Relator/Pacifier or an Analyst/Executive will tell you a significant amount about how you are likely to respond when negotiating.

By knowing your own style, and understanding the style of others, you will be able to adjust your natural tendencies to strengthen your position when need be.

### *Trade concessions that are low cost to you but high value to the other party*

It's a common mistake to believe that everybody wants the same thing in a negotiation; it's usually not the case.

Therefore, if you can offer things that you don't mind letting go of but that your opponent perceives as highly valuable, both of you feel good.

### *Ask for more than you expect/want at the beginning*

Your starting point is also your baseline – you can't easily ask for more afterwards, so don't be afraid to stretch up high at the start. Providing it's still a credible starting point, asking for more at the start raises the perceived value of what it is you are offering. Heck, they might even say yes straight away!

### *Don't say yes straight away*

In a negotiation, is better not to accept their first offer. Rather, use a little visual or vocal cue (the 'flinch', as Alastair says) to show your opponent you weren't expecting such a cruel whipping from the off, no matter what they begin with.

Finally, remember that *negotiating is highly emotional* and you should try your best not to let emotions affect you, including after the negotiation has concluded.

In the 2012 American movie *Arbitrage*<sup>1</sup>, Richard Gere has just negotiated the sale of his hedge fund for \$525m; he then turns to the buyer and says:

<sup>1</sup>*Arbitrage*, Dir Nicholas Jarecki, Lionsgate, (2012) [Film]

*"What would you have paid?"*

*"\$600 mill. What would you have taken?"*

*"\$475 mill"*

*"So you made a good deal."*

Gere nods and starts slowly to walk away. Then he stops, turns back and whispers confidentially in the man's ear:

*"Actually, I lied. I would have taken \$400mill".*

With a wry smile, and a simple pat on his shoulder, Gere drives an emotional stake into the heart of his opponent's perception of success. There is only one winner here.

No matter what the tangible outcome of a negotiation, feeling as if you could have done better feels the same as losing, and could even feel worse.

So whether your next negotiation is the sale of a fund or company, your promotion to Partner, or a post-Brexit trade deal with the EU, consistently whetting this essential skill set will serve your career very well indeed.

By Richard Keith



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